



GOA'S INQUISITION BY ALAN MACHADO

GOA'S INQUISITION BY ALAN MACHADO  
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The crucifix which once faced a heretic under interrogation in the hall of the Inquisitor Father. Crucified here, the heretic is the prisoner with head bowed and unblinking glossy stare penetrating his interrogator soul. It was his only recourse by a trembling fit, fell covering to the ground. The Cross here symbolizes the source of knowledge embarking the inquisitor in his quest to root out heresy.

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# Alan Machado's Insights on the Goa Inquisition

*A summary of the book Goa's Inquisition Facts  
Fiction Factoids.*

Alan Machado (Prabhu)

*Goa* +<sup>1556</sup><sub>1220</sub>

2022

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# **1. The Opening Up of the Inquisition's Archives and Statistics**

**W**RITING the history of Goa's Inquisition involves a balancing act and an unbiased evaluation of primary archival data, not selective repetitions of earlier histories compiled largely from secondary sources and peppered by personal biases. Fortunately, the modern historian can easily access a large volume of recently digitized primary documents in global archives.

Goa's Inquisition survived for 252 years with a short

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break of four years in between. The first inquisitors arrived in Goa in December 1560. The Inquisition operated from the Sabayo Palace until the king ordered its closure in 1774. It was reinstated in April 1778, but permanently closed in June 1812.

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*Over 252 years, the Goa  
Inquisition, the  
number of persons  
physically executed was  
177.*

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The inquisitors recorded the proceedings of every case and preserved them in a secure room (*secreto*) in accordance with the directives of the *Regimento*, its governing rules. Inventories of all case files were made in

1623 and 1774. They are preserved along with many other documents in Lisbon's Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT) and the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.

The process of identifying globally available archival sources began in the 1970s. Many of them

are available online today. Written in Portuguese, their fading lines tell much of the true story of Goa's Inquisition.

The ANTT contains auto-da-fe lists from Goa dating from 1650 to 1801, complete process files, correspondence, and much else. The Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Lisbon) preserves case details from 1561-1623 compiled by Inquisitor Figueira, and a number of auto-da-fe lists not available at the ANTT compiled by Antonio Moreira. The Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro) preserves copies of decrees, royal permits, regulations, edicts of faith, private edicts, lists of defendants, and correspondence dating from the sixteenth to nineteenth century. Other crates are still being catalogued and digitized.

Here are some statistics compiled by me from these documents:

- Numbers: 18,986 persons investigated. This number is 17% higher than the oft-quoted fig-

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ure given by Antonio Baiao in 1945.

- Socially deprived members of society comprised the highest percentage of those sentenced. Of 6,424 persons convicted between 1650 and 1773 (for which details are available), 66% came from lesser privileged castes and professions. During the time of intensifying economic and military reverses between 1685 and 1736, the Inquisition shifted its focus to the Província do Norte, and these numbers touched 71%.
- Non-Christians constituted 25%, with 85% of these cases conducted between 1685 and 1736, the period of intensifying Maratha conflicts. The North, with 78% of cases, was particularly badly affected. Offences related mostly to defying the ban on the public practice of gentile rituals which was seen as undermining Christianity and the security of the State. Whipping was a common punishment. Other punish-

ments included terms in the gun powder factory or galleys, exile, and fines. Some escaped by converting, and 4% were absolved. Except in the case of two Muslims (from Bijapur and Belgaum) burnt for sodomy in 1612, there is no record of any non-Christian being executed.

- At least 287 priests, about 1.5% of the total number, were investigated and punished for various offences, like heresy, which were seen as undermining Christianity.
- The number physically executed in 176 autos-da-fe for which details are known is 177. The effigies of a further 154 were burnt, the convicted being absent or dead.

For more you will need to read the book, or even better, access and research the numerous primary source documents preserved in global archives.

## **2. Creation of The Black Legend**

**G**OA'S Inquisition suffers from an image that grew blacker as the centuries passed. Every shade of black had its creator and every creator his reasons. The creation of the Black Legend dates to the early years of the Spanish Inquisition.

English and Dutch Protestant writers from the sixteenth centuries were instrumental in portraying the Inquisition in all its horrifying hues at a time when their countries were engaged in continual warfare with Spain, and Britain was convulsed by a

violent confrontation between Catholic and Protestant factions. In 1585, an English army joined Dutch forces fighting an occupying Spanish army. Three years later, a Spanish armada of 130 warships unsuccessfully attempted an invasion of England. The military campaign was supplemented by a vicious propaganda offensive in which the Spanish Inquisition gained an unquestioned reputation for extreme brutality and sadistic injustice. The ongoing public executions of Catholics in the fires of Protestant countries went unnoticed.

Dellon's *Relation de l'inquisition de Goa*, published in 1687, drew Goa into the Black Legend. It captivated audiences for decades, and inspired a new genre of writing, that of heroic individuals defying the Inquisition, of dungeons and torture, of innocent girls in the clutches of sadistic inquisitors. The avalanche smothered Dellon's own mixed reactions about the severity of the Inquisition, and his assertion "that the institution may be good..."

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*English and Dutch Protestant writers were instrumental in portraying the Inquisition in all its horrifying hues.*

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Dellon's book coincided with a growing interest in the concept of religious tolerance. In 1672, Limborch published his *Historia Inquisitionis* "to expose this shameful Practice, and render it the Abhorrence of all

Mankind..." It became one of the most important early works of Inquisition historiography, and a primary resource for other histories. Dellon's story also inspired fictional narratives presented as true accounts. For instance, a 1791 forgery supposedly translated from German has a storyline set in India straight out of Dellon's book. Entire sections are plagiarized. The black, however, has grown blacker. The number burnt, mostly for relapses into Judaism at a time when such cases had practically disappeared, has increased fivefold. The author's

motives become clear when he condemns the hegemony of Catholic priests in Spain and Portugal and asserts that freedom could only be found in Britain, Holland, and Switzerland.

The narrative reached India with Rev Claudio Buchanan, an advocate of the Protestant missionary effort in India, a nation seeking “the Revelation of God.” It coincided with Britain’s territorial ambitions, and presented Buchanan with an opportunity to undermine Britain’s main Christian rival in India, Portugal. The Inquisition and “its fires... lately lighted at Goa” became his principal target. He portrays his visit to Goa in 1808 as one of courage and daring, the lamb entering the lion’s den; a portrayal undermined by his aged, knowledgeable, and polite host, Inquisitor Josephus a Doloribus. Buchanan made it clear that his intention was to pressurize England into forcing Portugal to shut down the Inquisition.

Priolkar’s *The Goa Inquisition, The Terrible Tribunal*

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*for the East* published in 1961 has played a pivotal role in forming public opinion in India. Sadly, just a small part drawing from selective secondary sources deals with Goa's Inquisition proper. A major part consists entirely of Dellow's and Buchanan's narratives. Priolkar dedicated his book to Joaquim Rivara (1855-70) but ignored, through limitation or intent, his advice that a well-founded and impartial opinion on the Inquisition could not be arrived at without accessing the ANTT's records. Baiao emphasises these were secret, truthful and never intended to deceive. Priolkar circumvented Rivara's advice by blandly stating that these records were destroyed. Yet, he asserts "the story of the Inquisition is a dismal record of callousness and cruelty, tyranny and injustice, espionage and blackmail, avarice and corruption, repression of thought and culture and promotion of obscurantism..."

For their own reasons, Catholic Goan writers substituted motivated rhetoric for facts and historio-

graphic analysis. For instance, Baretto Miranda (1863) condemned the inquisitors’s “intolerance, ruthlessness, cruelty, and terror.” Cunha quotes the Archbishop of Evora’s reported condemnation of Goa’s Inquisition in 1897 as most vile and corrupt, with inquisitors “satisfying their beastly instincts” on women victims and then burning them as heretics.

Cunha’s statement is an example of the heightened rhetoric that dominated the final days of Portuguese rule in Goa. The archbishop’s motives are unclear, his allegations very wrong. The available auto-da-fe lists preserve the names of 17 women who were burnt in Goa. Most were poor, elderly widows from deprived sections of society, prematurely aged by a life of hard labour. It requires an elastic

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*Priolkar played a pivotal role in forming public opinion in India.*

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imagination to accept that they could have tickled an inquisitor's fancies.

The centuries-old treasure trove of documents preserved in global archives can no more be ignored by historians writing about Goa's Inquisition. *Goa's Inquisition Facts Fiction Factoids* analysis of the documents they preserve goes a long way in toning down the black to shades of grey.

### **3. Francis Xavier's Role?**

FRANCIS Xavier was in the vanguard of the Christianisation of Goa. He becomes, therefore, a logical target for sections of society intent on delegitimising Christianity in Goa. These sections, while blackening further the Black Legend, attempt to place the responsibility for the arrival of the Inquisition in Goa on Xavier. The entire force of this argument is placed on two lines of a letter dated May 16, 1546 written to the king from the Moluccas urging him to extend the Inquisition's jurisdiction to Asia to counter many who practised Judaism and Islam in Portugal's overseas fortresses.

*The case against Xavier  
derives from just two  
lines of a letter he wrote  
to the king from the  
Moluccas*

---

Xavier wrote many letters. These two lines constitute a tiny fraction of his voluminous correspondence. Xavier was not the first to request the Inquisition be sent to Goa. Miguel Vaz and

the Jesuit Lancilotto had made similar requests in 1543 and 1545. Xavier died 15 years before the Inquisition reached Goa, enough time for fundamental changes in Portugal's overseas policies. Citing his letter undermines the complex politics that took Lisbon many years in formulating a policy to counter the perceived threat to the Portugal's Asian trade from Jewish and Muslim merchants.

Discriminated against by government policies, targeted in public life, and hounded by the Inquisition, Portugal's *Cristaos-Novos* (converts from Judaism and Islam) left Portugal in large numbers to settle

in commercial hubs around the world. Their financial acumen soon gave them a significant role in the Asian trade, which already had a visible Jewish presence. At the crossroads of this Asia-Europe trade lay the newly emerging Ottoman power, a real and powerful Muslim threat to Christian Europe. In 1529 and 1532, their armies had unsuccessfully besieged Vienna.

Portuguese Cristaos-Novos merchants (concentrated in Goa and Cochin) made fortunes in India. Operating within the legal and commercial framework, besides being a significant revenue generation resource, they could not be countered through civil procedures. Allegations of heresy provided the key. Heresy being a matter investigated solely by the Inquisition, inquisitors were pushed into the vanguard of the offensive against the Cristaos-Novos mercantile network.

*Goa's* Inquisition, however, had no role to play in the first major heresy trials involving the Cristaos-

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Novos. Twenty (10 each from Cochin and Goa) were sent to Lisbon for alleged blasphemy. They arrived there in December 1560, just as the first inquisitors reached Goa. Leonor Caldeira, a Castillian widow, was the only one to be burnt in Lisbon's *auto-da-fe* of 1561. Many were released soon after. Some of them prudently migrated to the Ottoman Empire. Portugal's loss was the sultan's gain.

Joao Delgado Figueira (c. 1585-1654), while working in Goa, compiled details of persons prosecuted from 1561 to 1623. His *Reportorio* is preserved in Lisbon. It reveals in the first 40 years, 431 persons, 27% of the entire number, were convicted for Islamism, and 284 (18%) for Judaism. Among the victims was Catarina da Orta, burnt in 1568 for relapse into Judaism. Her evidence convicted her famous brother Garcia da Orta. Having died earlier, he escaped the flames, but his bones did not. They were exhumed and burnt in 1580.

It is only after 1600 that cases related to *gentilidade*

(offences related to gentile practices) increased. By then the perceived threat from Cristaos-Novos had been largely eliminated and Judaism case numbers fell to ones and twos. The inquisitors had met the expectations of the king and now set about suppressing a new and emerging threat, that of converts relapsing into their ancestral religion and thereby undermining, as perceived, the security of the State. It required an approach that necessitated a delicate balance between harshness and discipline in order to strengthen the new Faith without driving converts away. Laws granted converts leniency for the first two convictions, execution rates fell, and punishments were related increasingly towards public shaming and doses of spiritual instruction and penances.

## 4. Goa's Inquisition: the *auto-da-fe* lists

THE term *auto-da-fe* literally means 'act of faith'. It highlights the central theme of an auto-da-fe: the abjuration and reconciliation of a heretic who had been automatically excommunicated when taken into custody.

In the literature of the Inquisition, the auto-da-fe is associated with the grand public display which a Spanish inquisitor termed '*horrendum ac tremendum spectaculum*'. The ceremony was, despite the many shades of cruelty, vengefulness, and horror at-

tributed to it, a very public demonstration of the Inquisition's ability to bring a wayward Christian back to the 'bosom of the Church'.

At least 176 public autos-da-fe were conducted by Goa's Inquisition. Of these complete lists available from 1640 to 1773 give names of 8,075 persons prosecuted (5,985 men, 2,090 women). They include the names of 91 burnt physically and 113 in effigy. Additionally, the names of 1,232 persons who were sentenced in private autos-da-fe are known. The last public auto-da-fe took place on April 24, 1774.

The public auto-da-fe followed an ordered and richly repetitive ritual intended to awe and intimi-

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*The auto-da-fe was a  
very public  
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bring a wayward  
Christian back to the  
'bosom of the Church.'*

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date, to subdue and humiliate. It was given wide publicity and drew large crowds. The foremost religious and civil authorities participated in it. It was held inside or against the backdrop of the premier church or building to reinforce the statement of power and authority.

The public auto-da-fe was usually celebrated on a Sunday. The prisoners were led through the city's main streets, each in the custody of a *familaire* (a person of rank). They wore the penitential dress, were bareheaded and bare footed, and carried an unlighted taper in their hand. The least guilty walked in front. They were separated from those destined to be burned by a crucifix held high. Crucified Christ faced those spared execution.

The largest number of autos-da-fe was held in the Sabayo Palace or the Se Cathedral. Others were held in the churches of St Augustine (1653), St Francis (1652), convent of Santa Monica (1687) in Old Goa, and in Aldona (1646), Penha de Franca (1656), Jua

(1656), Assolna (1686), Cunculim (1694), and other places.

Lists of convicted persons were routinely sent to Lisbon. The hand-written sheets followed a prescribed format. The heading gives details of the date and place. Each entry gives details such as the name of the offender, sometimes aliases or pre-conversion name, age, caste, profession, nationality, relation to others, nature of offence, place of birth, and current place of residence. Punishments are listed in the right column. Men are listed first, and persons under various categories according to the severity of their offences.

*The highest number of participants in a single auto-da-fe was 266 on December 7, 1664. Tivim (104), Moira (71), and Sircaim (23) were the largest contributors. One person was physically burnt and three in effigy. Occasionally, autos-da-fe were confined to persons from a single village, as in Assolna (1686, 111 persons) and Cuncolim (1694, 80). The*

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last two autos-da-fe do not list individual offences. They were held shortly after these villages experienced severe disturbances and relapses during the Maratha wars. They were held to record the abjurations of prominent villagers and secure their oaths of loyalty to Church and State. No one was punished. The case was different in Jua (1699) when 41 Christians were punished for cultivating lands across the border in defiance of prohibitory laws.

Dellon leaves a detailed description of the auto-da-fe of 1676 in which he participated. The memory of an auto-da-fe lived in the public memory for a long time. The visible presence of penitents slaving in the City's dockyard and gunpowder factory were a constant reminder of the palpable presence of Goa's Inquisition.

## **5. Bardes and Aldona**

**M**OST of Bardes's villages featured in autos-da-fe at various times. The numbers, when analyzed according to region and period, suggest a correlation to the threats posed by Dutch and Maratha assertiveness.

Between 1650 and 1801, prosecutions were more or less evenly distributed throughout Bardes as would be expected for offences of a religious nature. However, between 1650 and 1660 when the sea-based Dutch assault on the Estado neared its climax, numbers were highest in areas susceptible to coastal influences. These moved inland as the Maratha threat

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intensified (1664-1736) with case numbers rising in the vulnerable Aldona (34%) and Tivim (42%) regions. They evened out as the Maratha threat subsided.

Mapusa saw its highest numbers in 1651 when 16 members of the Braganca clan (Charodo ganvkars) were sentenced. The principal actor was 65-year-old Manoel Braganca (Zagadde Gaunco), convicted of being a 'dogmatic sorcerer in a pact with the devil'. He was whipped and imprisoned, wore the *sanbenito* (perpetual) and carocha, spent a year in seclusion, and five years in a convent in Rachol fort. He was permanently exiled from Bardes.

The construction and defense of the network of fortifications between Colvale and Tivim between 1635 and 1681 imposed a heavy burden on its inhabitants economically and by way of forced conscriptions of younger men. Food production fell drastically so that the rice harvest could not meet more than four months of Bardes's requirement.

Many of Tivim's inhabitants migrated to Kanara. Relapses into gentile practices increased. The Inquisition intensified its efforts to curb social unrest. At least 11 autos-da-fe were held between 1653 and 1664 but we have details only for 1660 and 1664. If the number of 104 persons from Tivim in the latter is any indication, the actual numbers must have been large indeed.

Twenty percent of the Inquisition's convictions for Bardes came from Aldona, Moira, and Nachinola which constituted around 9% of its Christian population. In 1664, 71 Moidkars, mostly Brahmans and a few Sudros, were sentenced for *gentilidade*.

Aldona features prominently during certain periods. Being a frontier village until after the Maratha wars, it was open to influences from across the border. Figueira's *Reportorio* and Ghantkar's translation of *ganvkari* records between 1595 and 1605 leave a valuable insight in the Inquisition's role in the progress of Christianity in Aldona. The latter

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records the steady progress of Christianity and the ganvkari's regular contributions towards the construction and maintenance of Aldona's Church of St Thomas. The former records the Inquisition's role in preventing converts from relapsing.

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*Aldona, being a frontier village until after the Maratha wars, was open to influences from across the border.*

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In the first six decades, the Inquisition prosecuted just 28 persons from Aldona, 16 of them in 1607. Details of 21 public autos-da-fe held between 1650 and 1699 contain the names of 39 Aldonkars, 28 of them in

1653. The greatest number, 113, more than 50% of the total of 218, were prosecuted in just 12 years from 1700 to 1712.

Many of the 28 names appearing between 1561 and 1623 also appear in ganvkari records. The first Aldonkar to fall foul of the Inquisition was Lourenco

Ferrao, son of Antonio Ferrao and Leonor Alvares. Married to Domingas Fernandes, he appeared at the auto-da-fe at the Se Cathedral in 1592. He had consulted sorcerers and sacrificed goats and roosters at temples. He abjured for light suspicion of heresy, was whipped, and paid a fine of 100 pardaos. He was convicted again in 1607 for worshipping in temples. He now abjured for vehement suspicion and was sent to the polvara for two years. Lourenco belonged to the third vangod. His name appears in the ganvaki meeting of September 22, 1595, and a few later meetings. Lourenco's father Antonio was prominent in other meetings. He too was convicted in 1607 for gentilidade. He was imprisoned and sentenced to wear the penitential dress for six months.

The period 1700-1712 was one of intensified Maratha (Bhonsles) invasions of Bardes. That these 12 years provided over 50% of cases is a clear reflection on the Inquisition's role in containing dissent and potential desertions within the Estado during times

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of stress. At least one inquisitorial visit to Mapusa, Aldona, Revora, and Nadora took place in 1710. Of the 48 persons sentenced in 1702, Luis D'Souza of Quitla received the harshest sentence: six years in the galleys. Of the indicted in 1709, 17 died in the prison and were absolved. Another 13 were received dead. That all were men, suggests their involvement in the conflict. The deaths in prison may have resulted from an epidemic, or ill-treatment in Aldona's civil jail.

## **6. Vhoddlem Ghor? Or Vhoddilachem Ghor?**

THE Konkani name *vhoddlem ghor* (big house) for the Sabayo Palace, once a grand and imposing structure, gives it a sinister connotation that credits the building as the source of an oppressive shadow that darkened Goa's skies for 252 years. Two detailed plans of the building suggest *vhoddilachem ghor* (house of elders) may have been a more appropriate name.

A 1775 city map locates the building on the south side of the great square, the Terreiro do Sabayo.

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Sited on a plot roughly two acres in extent, it faced north towards the east-west flowing Mandovi River. To its west stood the central structure of ecclesiastical power, the Se Cathedral, their corners almost touching each other. Opposite it was the old Senate House, and on the east, the Rua Direita, the main road that led from the wharf past the Pallacio da Fortaleza and under the Arch of the Viceroy. The location of the Sabayo Palace alongside the premier buildings of State and Church was not just symbolic, but also functional.

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*The Konkani name 'vhoddlem ghor' gives a sinister connotation as the source of an oppressive shadow....*

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Two plans dating to 1634 and 1779 give details of the Sabayo Palace. It consisted of two main functional areas integrated into one building: the prison, and the administrative area which included residential

and commercial spaces. The administrative bloc included the secret archives, chapel, interrogation, audience, and judgement rooms. The prison was separated from the administrative area by a windowless wall. It was enclosed by high walls.

The building had a ground, first floor, and a second-floor annex. The ground floor had three sections with the entrance veranda located in the central section. Above it was a large hall in which private autos-da-fe were held. A large table, about 15 feet long and four feet wide, stood in its centre on a platform about a foot high. It was covered in green cloth brought from England. A large crucifix reaching almost to the ceiling adorned the wall at one end of the table.

Between the Sabayo Palace and the Rua Direita was a site marked Leilao in the 1634 plan. It was here that slaves and confiscated goods were regularly auctioned. The 1779 plan reveals a westward extension into the Leilao, with rooms built around a cen-

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tral courtyard. The ground floor rooms were rented out to *gentios* for use as shops and storerooms. The senior inquisitor lived in the suite above.

The plan has a legend: *Plan of the lower (floor) of the Tribunal Prisons: and the shops/storerooms M and N which were always rented to the Gentios*. The five rooms marked M in the west wing beneath the first inquisitor's apartment, and three marked N in the east wing had a combined area considerably more than that of the hall. The inquisitors faced continuous problems over the years in collecting these rents.

The building took many years to renovate. In 1632, the viceroy informed the king that the prison was almost complete. The prison was two storeys high with a gallery of small cells, ten feet square. The number of cells was considerably less than the 200 estimated by Dellan.

The 1634 plan shows 43 cells on the lower floor and 42 on the upper. The 1779 plan shows 28 cells on

the lower floor and 35 on the upper. Ventilation vents were added to each cell, and common toilets on each floor. Four uncovered galleries running between cell rows allowed light and ventilation to filter in. The cells were whitewashed, clean, and lighted by a small grated and open window placed at a height. The walls were five feet thick. Every cell was secured by two doors. The outer door was usually left open from 6 to 11 am for ventilation. Neither plan shows dungeons or a separate torture room. This, however, does not mean prisoners were not tortured; torture was commonly used in interrogating stubborn prisoners in civil courts.

The Sabayo Palace was razed between 1828 and 1830, and its material used for constructing Panjim's public buildings. The remaining debris was finally cleared in 1859. Today a lawn covers the stage where once so many weighty issues were investigated, debated, and judged, so many human tragedies played out.

## **7. Dellan, Ephraim, Gabriel, and Pe. Joao da Costa**

**T**HE Portuguese occupation of Goa had multiplied its global trade. Goa had become a magnet for European merchants and spies seeking all kinds of information of value to their countries seeking to grab a share of the riches of the East. Unable to counter the influx head on, Portugal drew the Inquisition into securing Portugal's commercial interests. The cases of two Frenchmen, Pe Ephrem de Nevers (1650) and Charles Dellan (1676), show

how the Inquisition used heresy laws to investigate and attempt to thwart an increasingly assertive French presence in India.

As Portugal's dominance of the European economic and religious presence in coastal Asia began to crumble in the seventeenth century, it became increasingly involved in a cut-throat geo-political and economic contest with Holland, England, and France. The first two,

being Protestant nations, introduced a religious element to their economic and military challenge by offering freedom of religion in the territories they operated in. This was particularly effective in drawing artisans and merchants away from the

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*Goa had become a magnet for European merchants and spies, seeking all kinds of information of value to their countries and to grab a share of the riches of the East.*

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Província do Norte. The approach was a little different with France, a Catholic country. The Capuchins, established in Surat in 1639, were active in the Propaganda Fide which challenged the dominance of Portugal's Padroado Real. In Surat, they played a significant role in supporting French trading interests even as three major French fleets sailed to India between 1665 and 1670. An economically weakened and impoverished Portugal had nothing to counter this impressive display of naval might. It is in this context that the Inquisition, the most impressive and feared institution of European religious power in Asia, became a credible instrument in Portugal's policy. A key element of this strategy was to extend the confrontation into the religious realm, and send out a cautionary warning that any challenge to Portugal's interests would be resisted with all the means available.

Pe Ephraim was a French Capuchin well connected in political circles. Landing in Surat in 1641, he trav-

elled to Madras. Here, Pe Ephraim constructed a chapel for the Catholics of Madras and the neighbouring Portuguese settlement of Sao Tome. The Portuguese viewed Pe Ephraim's activities as not only undermining the Padroado Real but also helping the East India Company which was assiduously wooing Portuguese merchants from Sao Tome.

Pe Ephraim was kidnapped and taken to the Inquisition's prison in Goa. He was convicted of heresy and eventually released after his abjuration in November 1651. He was allowed to return to Madras.

Charles Gabriel Dellon, a French physician, landed in Surat in 1669. While working for the French Company, he sailed to other Indian ports and collected information for the benefit of his employers. Dellon visited Goa in 1672. He described the roles of its functionaries, the viceroy, the courts, the Misericordia, and the Inquisition, and its harbour, forts, trade, sailing seasons, and the aljube and polvora. Of the Inquisition he writes: "in front of the Cathe-

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dral, in a large square, is this house of terror: it is the severe Inquisition that the Portuguese call Santa Casa, or Casa do Santo Officio." Little was he to know then that he would shortly get an intimate experience of its inside.

He was arrested in Daman in 1673, after he had left the Company's service, and taken to Goa. He spent the next two years in prison, and abjured for vehement suspicion of heresy in the auto-da-fe of January 12, 1676. Exiled to Portugal to serve in the galleys, he was released in Lisbon in 1677 through the intercession of the Queen's French physician.

Dillon suspected that his arrest and exile had political overtones. The French had arrived in India with a lavish display of military, naval, and economic power at a time of continuing decline and losses for the Estado da India. Unable to counter this latest European rival militarily or economically, Goa's Inquisition was drawn in to deliver both symbolic and personal scores.

Gabriel was an Ethiopian Jew enslaved when still a boy. His story is one of enslavement at the intersecting frontiers of the Christian and Islamic worlds in Asia. He converted to Islam and was brought to Ahmadnagar from where he escaped to Portuguese Chaul. He converted to Christianity but relapsed and returned to Ahmadnagar. For some unknown reason he tried to return to Portuguese Chaul when he was apprehended at the border. In 1595, Gabriel, aged 40 years, was convicted of heresy and apostasy, but shown clemency for having returned of his own free will, and demonstrating repentance. He was sent to undergo spiritual instruction and penance at the Dominican monastery. He fled not long after, but was apprehended at the border. Convicted a second time, the inquisitors sought the opinion of two interpreters on whether Gabriel understood the nature of his crime. As there was some doubt, his case file was sent to Lisbon for a decision while he was sent to the galleys. From correspondence

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dated 1597, we know that decision was still awaited. Why would the inquisitors have spared a slave with no rights, all alone in this part of the world, treated by society as a commodity rather than a human, and convicted twice of a crime that merited execution? Perhaps an answer lies hidden somewhere in some archive.

Padre Joao da Costa, a Portuguese Capuchin, was a serial sodomite with a long history of abusing young boys. In 1666, aged 44 years, he confessed voluntarily before the inquisitors and was let off with a stern warning. It had little effect. He was arrested in 1670 after he was denounced by other boys he had abused. After an exhaustive trial lasting nine months, he revealed having sodomized many other boys. He was convicted, and his papers were sent to Lisbon for a final decision.

In December 1673, he was handed over to secular justice and executed.

## **8. So What Really Led to Goa's Out-Migration?**

**K**ANARA was the main destination of Goan emigrations during between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Christians and non-Christians emigrated for different reasons.

In the 1560s, a number of influential Brahmins who chose to resist coercive conversion laws were expelled from Goa. They were given short notice to dispose of their property and leave. They were accompanied by lesser privileged Konkani speakers.

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An 1801 British census of Kanara estimated a population of 18,615 Konkani speaking non-Christians (13,074 bankers, shopkeepers, traders; 5,541 cultivators, gardeners, messengers, servants, others). This would suggest a figure of about 2,000 if all the emigration had occurred in the 1560s.

Evidence from different sources confirms that the major emigrations of Christians spanned a century (1650-1750). This is reflected in the treaties, which reveal an increasing Christian population, signed between Goa and the neighbouring Ikkeri State, and by the growing number of churches in Kanara. The period coincides with the beginning and peaking of Maratha invasions of Goa and the fall of the Provincia do Norte.

Many prominent Mangalorean families were part of this exodus, largely from Bardes. By 1784, Kanara contributed perhaps 20% (about 50,000) of the combined Goa-Kanara Christian population. The 15-year Captivity (1784-99) during Tipu's reign dec-

imated and dispersed over half this number. The 1801 census estimated 13,000 Christians (cultivators, merchants) in Kanara. There were smaller populations dispersed in Malabar and Kodagu at this time.

There is a mistaken notion that the emigration of Goans was caused by the activities of the Inquisition. The auto-da-fe lists reveal this to be very wrong. During the period of peak emigrations from Goa, the Inquisition focused almost entirely on the Província do Norte (71% of cases). It had delegated much of its responsibility of maintaining the social order in Goa, though not its judicial powers, to *naiques* drawn from prominent and influential local Goan Catholics.

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*There is a mistaken notion that the emigration of Goans was caused by the activities of the Inquisition.*

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The primary reason for the emigration of Goan Christians to Kanara is clearly stated in government records. Nothing can be clearer than the viceroy's letter to the king in 1689: "When our enemy Sambaji invaded Bardes, the natives abandoned the defence of Tivim and went away. Some of them --- settled in the country of the queen of Kanara...". An earlier viceroy, referring to the plight of the population, had advised the king to have pity on his subjects, adding "No one can extract honey or oil out of stones."

Bardes's economy had been devastated. A besieged government with no resources became a giant mill-stone around the necks of the ganvkaris. It continued to extract men and money to build and man its defences. For instance, in 1710 it ordered the dividends of people who had migrated to Kanara be used to repay government debts. At the same time the central government was advising local governments that the expulsion of the Gentiles, who were

in sole control of all commerce, would destroy the economy and consequently the State. Left with little or nothing, migration was the only alternative for Christians.

The Inquisition's auto-da-fe lists leave us with a stark reminder of the extent of this emigration. Al-dona, a border village, which had contributed 50% of penitents from Bardes during 1700-12, a time of intensifying Maratha conflict, contributed just 8% post 1740.

## **9. Summing Up**

GOA'S Inquisition was the premier institution used by Portugal to impose a new identity on its overseas subjects and secure their loyalty through 'social disciplining'. Entrusted by the king to consolidate Portugal's cultural and economic expansion into new worlds, it attempted to mould diverse and wide-spread populations into one nation by being a guardian of religious orthodoxy and imposing a uniform social and cultural code modelled after that in Portugal. The process involved the reform of Church administration, instilling Christian values in the everyday life of Christians, pen-

etrating individual consciences, and gradually but firmly imposing bonds of obedience to the Church and State in their minds.

The first Inquisitors were sent to Goa primarily to counter the perceived threat to the security and trading interests of Portugal's overseas outposts from the Cristaos-Novos trading network and Islamic influences. Not surprisingly, 45% of its cases in the first 40 years of its operations related to Judaism and Islamism. It is only after this that gentilidade came into focus.

Goa's Inquisition could not have operated for 252 years in complex and dynamic circumstances with-

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*The first Inquisitors were sent to Goa primarily to counter the perceived threat to the security and trading interests of Portugal's overseas outposts from the Cristaos-Novos trading network and Islamic influences.*

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out active support from the State, Church, and elite social groups. Each had its own reasons for allying with the secretive and powerful organisation, both feared and looked upon for justice in a society riddled by corruption and constantly threatened by known and unknown dangers.

The Inquisition's largely invisible but pervasive power emanated from the grim facade of the Sabayo Palace, dominating the City's Terreiro do Sabayo along with the Se Cathedral and Senate. It is from here that prisoners were led out in the impressive auto-da-fe ceremony to be reconciled to the Church after their abjuration. Surprisingly, though, the large rooms located on the ground floor were rented out to gentios, and even housed a butcher's shop.

The Inquisition's authority did not extend to non-Christians unless their offences were related to undermining the Christian character of the State and impeding the Inquisition's operations. Non-

Christians did not participate in autos-da-fe as the issue of reconciliation to the Church did not arise.

For converts there was no turning back from Christianity. The Inquisition assumed the role of a “health court” for Christian souls. Heresy laws were a powerful weapon in the Inquisition’s arsenal to prevent that turning back. The Inquisition aimed at rooting out heretics, reforming them, or failing, consigning them to infamy and fire and so erasing their existence and memory. A primary focus of an investigation was to obtain a confession and abjuration from a guilty person. Reconciled persons demonstrated their sincerity by humbly undergoing the punishments imposed on them. Execution was generally reserved for impenitent, obstinate, and dogmatic relapses, and serial sodomites. An execution was a public acknowledgement of the Inquisition’s failure to bring around a guilty person.

The Inquisition’s operations extended beyond doctrinal issues into the realm of socio-political affairs.

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The edict of 1736 was an attempt to influence Christian consciences in minute matters of everyday life. The prosecution of bigamists and sodomites came within the Inquisition's purview because such offences were seen as threatening the social order. So too, the socially under-privileged castes and professions were confined within the boundaries prescribed by State, religion, and society. The Inquisition was used against rival European nations in situations where the military option was not feasible by targeting select individuals, for instance Dello. Anyone dealing with Muslim States, Portugal's principal rivals in Asia, was similarly prosecuted. When Maratha activity threatened the Estado da India, it was most active in most vulnerable areas and secured bonds of loyalty en masse like in Assolna and Cuncolim.

Society at large was the Inquisition's eyes and ears. The Inquisition could never have functioned without the great number of denunciations it received

some from non-Christians.

Torture and the flames of an auto-da-fe have been successfully implanted in our minds by the Black Legend as an authentic image of a uniquely unrelenting and sadistic Goan Inquisition. Documents and statistics belie this. Statistics show Goa's Inquisition in a far more lenient light than that of Evora and Lisbon, or for that matter, contemporary England. Ironically, much of the credit for the creation of the Black Legend goes to Anglo-centric historians, and the Inquisition's own reticence in countering it. This has given imaginative and motivated writers a free hand to project their personal biases.

Following the General Council's recommendation that converts be treated with "mildness" so that they were not driven away from the Church, in the early years the Inquisition granted transgressing converts grace periods to voluntarily confess their guilt in order to be received "with kindness and mercy". Offenders were given two reprieves,

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and severely punished as dogmatists for the third time.

The Inquisition's judicial procedure was governed by well-drafted regulations and implemented by qualified officials appointed after due diligence. Many of its features can be seen in modern courts.

A new breed of scholarly research with access to long secret archives has begun challenging the Black Legend. Perhaps some forgotten cobwebbed corner of a museum may someday yield more of the considerable documentation that was sent to Lisbon over the centuries. All this may change our image of Goa's Inquisition. We can only wait and see.

## **10. Contents of the Book**

**B**ELOW is a listing of the chapters included in the book, now in print, and available in Goa and elsewhere. The two-colour, well illustrated book has the following chapters:

- The *Santo Officio da Inquisicao da Goa – More Sinned Against Than Sinning?*
- The Opening Up of the Inquisition's Archives
- The Inquisition in Europe
- The Arrival of the Inquisition in Goa

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- Lisbon's auto-da-fe of 1561
- The Changing World of Goa's Inquisitors
- Jurisdiction and the Inquisition's Shifting Focus
- Vhoddlemghor* or *vhoddilachemghor*
- The Ministers and Officials of the Inquisition
- The Inquisitorial Procedure
- Heresy and Treason
- Gentilidade* and Sorcery
- Sodomy and the Process of Pe Joao da Costa
- Other Offences and Sentences
- The Numbers
- The *auto-da-fe* Lists
- The First Six Decades 1561-1623
- The 1632 Transfers

- The autos-da-fe of 1650-51
- Dellow, Ephraim, and a Forgery
- Assolna (1686), Cuncolim (1694), Jua (1699)
- The Edict of 1736; Aldona at the Northern Frontier
- Bardes and the Inquisition
- Padres and Friars
- Those Not of the Faith
- The Privileged and Underprivileged
- Gabriel's Story
- The Inquisition and Tipu's chelas
- The Burnings
- The Archbishop of Evora's Sermon and Dellow Again
- The 1684 Ban on Konkani

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- Emigration and the Inquisition
- A Summing Up
- Bibliography
- Glossary and Notes
- Index

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